Safeguarding and Remote Learning: Guidance for Schools
Northamptonshire County Council
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All education settings should continue to operate in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) and Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).

1 Policy and Training

Staff

Staff should be reminded of procedures and expectations for online learning, remote learning and safeguarding during partial closures.

They should be reminded of the following documents and receive updated training as necessary:

- The Covid-19 safeguarding addendum.
- Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (AUP) as part of the school's behaviour policy/code of conduct.
- Use of social media.
- Image use.
- Anti-bullying policy.
- Mobile technology policy (including use of personal devices and behaviour expectations).
- Internal and external online safety reporting mechanisms (including raising safeguarding concerns with the Designated Safeguarding Lead).

Staff should also be reminded of:

- the school's IT classroom management expectations e.g. age/ability appropriate supervision, pre-checking search terms, using age/ability appropriate tools
- the procedures to follow when responding to peer on peer (child on child) abuse concerns.

It is important to ensure that all staff and parents are reminded that:

- Deliberate misuse will be responded to in line with existing school policies.
- Welfare concerns about any children should be brought to the attention of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) without delay.
- Any concerns about members of staff should be reported to the headteacher.

2 General guidance for remote online learning

Where children are being asked to learn online at home, schools must ensure they can access remote learning safely. Schools will need to consider how best to manage remote learning and should implement the approaches which best suit the needs of their children and staff. This should include the age and ability of learners and IT provision and access. Schools are free to choose the platform/s used for remote learning, but it is advisable to use software with robust privacy settings such as Microsoft Teams.

In all cases, parents and carers should be informed of the websites and apps that children will be asked to use, what children will be asked to do online and which members of staff their child will be contacted by or interacting with. Parents should be encouraged to supervise their children online and implement suitable parental controls.

The following safeguarding advice will help schools to manage safeguarding risks when providing remote learning, including when sharing live video/audio or pre-recorded content.

General recommendations for safer remote learning

- Risk assessments should take place from a technical, curriculum, data protection and safeguarding point of view.
- Any platforms or systems used should be approved prior to any use with children.
- Ensure that any devices that children are given to use at home are equipped with appropriate filtering and monitoring software.
- If devices have been donated or repurposed, ensure that they have been completely wiped and are clear of any old files, apps and data before giving to children.
- It is recommended that schools use existing video conferencing tools/platforms where possible, as they should have already been evaluated and have any necessary parental consents.
- New platforms or systems should be risk assessed and approved by SLT prior to any use.
- Education specific or commercial products which offer more control should be used rather than free or home use versions.
- Platforms should be set up securely by the school to prevent unauthorised access.
- Resources used should be used in line with existing teaching and learning policies, taking licensing and copyright into account.
- Any personal data used by staff or captured or used when delivering remote learning must be processed and stored with appropriate consent and in accordance with data protection requirements (the Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR and relevant school policy).
- Staff, parents and children should be made aware they need to follow school policies and procedures.
- Policies and procedures may need to be updated to reflect new technology use and behaviour expectations.

Staff should:

- Use school provided devices e.g. laptops, tablets and phones where possible. If this is not possible, SLT should ensure clear expectations are in place, for example restricting access, locking devices, blocking/withholding personal phone numbers, logging times/dates of contact and not taking or recording images for their own personal use.
- Use school approved communication channels or platforms only.
- Use an approved staff photo or the school logo as a profile photo if required.
- Staff should not use personal accounts or social media channels to provide remote learning or support.
- Use parents or carers email accounts to communicate with children if it is necessary to do so. Staff should copy in a senior member of staff.
- receive training prior to using platforms/systems which explores how to use key functions as well as behaviour expectations.
- Operate within school policy. Staff behaviour and language use during live sessions should be in line with the staff behaviour policy/code of conduct.
- Dress professionally and use a neutral background for any recording, video streaming or live lessons. If possible, enable background blur tools when live videos are being shared.

- Ensure that no personal data is visible when streaming sessions (e.g. an open spreadsheet that is accidentally screen-shared).

3 General recommendations for live streamed sessions

- Platforms should be set up securely to prevent unauthorised access. Password protect live streams and use 'waiting rooms' or 'lobbies' to restrict access.
- Live sessions should be planned and scheduled during school hours.
- Staff should record the length, time, date and attendance of any live sessions held.
- A member of SLT, the Designated Safeguarding Lead or another senior member of staff should have the ability to 'drop into' live lessons where possible.
- Parents should be aware that live sessions are taking place and ensure that their child is appropriately supervised.
- If schools opt to 'record' live streamed sessions, schools should ensure that appropriate consent has been obtained from all of those who are being recorded. All participants should be made aware that the session is being formally recorded.
- Schools should ensure that the recording is stored and accessed in line with existing data protection requirements.
- Schools should be aware that other household members may be present during live sessions, for example staff's family members or children's sibling/parents. Clear expectations should be shared with the whole community to ensure anyone who can be seen and/or heard during live sessions is suitably clothed, uses appropriate language and does not share sensitive/personal information.
- School should assess if it necessary for children to use live video, microphones or text-based chat when remote learning. These functions may need to be disabled according to school decision and context e.g. age/ability of children. If they are enabled, school should evidence any action taken to minimise or remove risks.

4 Recommendations for one-way communication

This is when a teacher live streams video and/or shares screen with audio and children are not visible and cannot interact.

- Where possible two members of staff should be present in live streamed sessions. One member of staff should be responsible for delivering content and the other provide support and safeguarding assistance if required, for example monitoring children's interaction.
- If this is not possible, schools should evidence the decision making and outline action taken to reduce risks.
- Consider reducing live camera time (e.g. staff talking over PowerPoint slides or sharing work demonstrations rather than video streaming).
- Disable children's video/audio if possible, or ensure staff have control over cameras/microphones functionality.
- Children should be encouraged to access the live stream from a shared/communal space or room with an open door and/or when appropriately supervised by a parent/carer or another appropriate adult.

5 Recommendations for two-way communication

This is when teacher can see/hear children and children can see/hear each other.

- Two members of staff should be present in sessions. One member of staff can deliver curriculum content whilst the other provides behaviour/technical support and safeguarding assistance if required e.g. monitoring children's videos and any chat if not disabled.
- Children should be provided with clear boundaries and expectations. They should:
    - dress appropriately e.g. clothes they might wear for a non-uniform day, not pyjamas.
    - behave as they would in the classroom.
    - live stream from a shared/communal space or room with an open door and/or when appropriately supervised by a parent/carer or another appropriate adult.
    - ensure there is a neutral background to their videos or use background blur options.
- If schools allow children to upload their own background rather than use default images, clear expectations about what is appropriate should be in place.
- Schools should control children's video/audio features.
- Schools should prevent children from turning their camera/microphone on themselves where possible, depending on their age and needs.
- Where possible, schools should restrict children's access to chat and/or video functions after a live session has ended.

6 Recommendations for 1:1 sessions between member of staff and child

Schools should avoid 1:1 sessions between children and staff where possible, however, Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19) states '*Schools might want to consider whether one-to-one sessions could be appropriate in some circumstances. For example, to provide pastoral care or provide support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.*'.

If a school decide it is appropriate and necessary to facilitate 1:1 sessions, to reduce risks:

- If a session does not require confidentiality e.g. for tuition, two adults should be present if possible. For example, a member of staff could be on site with another member of staff present in the room. The 2nd member of staff does not have to be involved in the session, but children should be made aware they are present. Alternatively, a parent/carer could remain in the room with the child whilst the session takes place.
- This will not be possible in all circumstances, or if particularly sensitive conversations (for example to provide pastoral care, counselling etc.) are taking place. If this is the case, the session should:

    - be risk assessed and approved by SLT.
    - be auditable e.g. the member of staff logs time, date and attendance.
    - Only take place using school provided equipment, platforms and accounts.
    - Only take place when the member of staff is on-site, unless it is an emergency situation.

7 Recommendations if using live streamed or pre-recorded content from other providers

Where schools are directing children to content from another provider, **they must ensure it is quality assured to check that it is safe, suitable and appropriate**. See guidance below.

- Only use content from providers who have a specific and up-to-date child protection policy in line with DfE guidance.
- The DSL should be satisfied that the providers child protection policy and procedures are in line with the current 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' guidance.
- Have a member of staff join any 'live' sessions so they can monitor the content and the interactions/behaviour of the children as they would within a school environment.
- Ensure the platform being used is safe and appropriate - live chat is managed and/or moderated, for example.
- Make appropriate checks to ensure any staff delivering the content are suitable.
- Monitor a selection of sessions and/or content to check they are being conducted appropriately.

8 Supporting children

- At a level appropriate to their age and ability, learners should be reminded of existing procedures and expectations, as this may have been different during remote learning situations or may have been revised by the school. This should include:
  - Acceptable Use of Technology Policy (AUP) as part of the school's behaviour policy/code of conduct
  - Anti-bullying policy
  - Behaviour policy and expectations
  - Internal and external online safety reporting mechanisms e.g. speaking to a member of staff, who the DSL is etc.

- Children should:
  - use official school managed accounts to access remote learning.
  - be reminded of remote learning behaviour expectations.

9 Social media considerations

- During Covid-19 restrictions, many schools will have increased their use of social media as a communication tool. Schools should ensure decisions and behaviour expectations regarding use of social media are clearly documented.

- Schools are required to address communication and use of social media in their policies e.g. the staff code of conduct. Schools should review their policies and ensure official and personal use of social media is addressed; for example, staff should not use personal social media accounts to communicate with learners and/or parents.

- Content shared on social media requires planning as it can lead to several safeguarding risks, such as blurring of professional boundaries and risk of vulnerable children/parent being identified. Schools should undertake a risk assessment approach when implementing official use of social media to ensure all reasonable safeguarding precautions are taken.

10 Online safety and safeguarding issues

- Review existing age/ability appropriate internal reporting mechanisms for learners and consider if they can be implemented safely e.g. talking to a member of staff, reporting to DSL, use of a dedicated reporting email, 'worry boxes', peer support.
- Remind children of age/ability appropriate external online safety reporting mechanisms e.g. Childline, CEOP, IWF, Report Harmful Content etc.
- Share online safety advice and reminders of reporting mechanisms with children and parents/carers.

11 Children learning on-site

Filtering and monitoring systems
- Ensure that appropriate filtering and monitoring policies and systems are operational in line with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (KCSIE) 2020 requirements.
- SWGfL provide a tool for schools to use to check if their filtering is compliant.
- UK Safer Internet Centre provide guidance on 'Appropriate Filtering and Monitoring'.

12 National guidance

- DfE: 'Restricting attendance during the national lockdown'
- DfE: 'Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus' (COVID-19)
- DfE: 'Review your remote education provision'
- DfE: 'Providing remote education information to parents'
- Remote Education Temporary Continuity Direction – Explanatory Note
- NSPCC: Undertaking Remote Teaching Safely
- National Cyber Security Centre: Video Conferencing Services
- SWGfL: Safe Remote Learning
- LGfL: Safeguarding during Covid-19
- Safer Recruitment Consortium: Addendum to Safer Working Practice Guidance

Appendix A

Review your remote education framework: Schools (12th January 2020)

The following tables are taken from the safeguarding section of '*Review your remote education framework: schools*', published 12th January 2021. See full document and link to self-assessment framework for FE here: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-your-remote-education-provision

Safeguarding and wellbeing

Teachers and leaders understand how to maintain effective safeguarding arrangements whilst also providing high-quality remote education and supporting pupil wellbeing.

Scoring

1. Identify	2. Develop and plan	3. Implement	4. Embed	5. Sustain
Not yet in place or there are major gaps.	Identified gaps but a plan is being developed to address them.	In the process of implementing systems and practices to address this.	Practices and systems are in place with minor gaps.	Practices and systems are fully embedded, and there are examples of best practice.

Approach	Strengths	Gaps	Score (1 to 5)	Potential actions and resources if score is 1 or 2
Ensuring safety There are clear safeguarding protocols in place to ensure pupils are safe during remote education. It is essential to have and communicate clear reporting routes so that children, teachers, parents and carers can raise any safeguarding concerns in relation to remote education.				GOV.UK provides guidance on Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19) Schools should also refer to statutory guidance for schools and colleges on safeguarding children.
Online safety If the school chooses to provide remote education using live streaming and pre-recorded videos, teachers understand how to keep children safe whilst they are online.				GOV.UK provides guidance on: • Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19) • Teaching online safety in schools

Wellbeing Leaders**,** teachers and pupils are aware of how to spot potential wellbeing or mental health issues and how to respond. There are regular catch ups with pupils, one to one and via assemblies, particularly for those that are most vulnerable.				GOV.UK provides advice on supporting pupil wellbeing during remote education.
Data management The school has appropriate data management systems in place which comply with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).				GOV.UK provides guidance to support schools: • with data protection activity, including compliance with GDPR • to be cyber secure
Behaviour and attitude There are clear rules for behaviour during remote lessons and activities. Pupils know them and teachers monitor and enforce them.				GOV.UK provides guidance on behaviour expectations in schools.